

SPIRITUAL DARKNESS

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Darkness is simply the absence of light. When one is said to be in darkness, it means that wherever that person is there is no light. It may also mean lack of knowledge—when one is said to be in the dark about something, he has no knowledge about a particular thing. Spiritual darkness is actually the lack of knowledge on spiritual matters, and it's dangerous to be found in such a situation.



God was upset with His people who were in such a condition, according to **Hosea 4:6**: *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”* When the prophets at that time lacked knowledge on spiritual matters, they engaged in sins that led them into separation from God. Included in their bad practices were engaging in idolatry and forgetting the Lord's law. Some of them read, heard, and learned the law but ignored it deliberately. Some simply couldn't have faith in the unseen God; thus, they turned to gods carved from trees or made from gold and silver. How shameful!

Modern Christians sometimes are not really that different from those living in early times in that they stay in darkness about biblical teaching. For example, prophets of old prophesied that the law would come from Zion (**Isaiah 2:2-4**). Today it's really surprising to see people following strange teaching that does not go back to that time (**2 Corinthians 4:3-6**). The gospel has been veiled to them because they do not listen to the new covenant.

In 33 A.D., several events took place; but one remarkable event that we all cherish is the birth of the bride of Christ, the church, not churches. This event was the establishment of the Lord's kingdom in fulfillment of prophesies. Nations gathered in the city of Jerusalem, and the church

began its mission with much power when the Holy Spirit came (**Mark 9:1**). On that day, multitudes were baptized and added to the body of Christ by Jehovah (**Acts 2:47**); and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, which is the doctrine of Christ (**2 Peter 1:16-21**; **John 17:8**). Paul also labels the gospel as the power of God to save (**Romans 1:16**).

In our day, people sometimes fail to endure sound doctrine because of their *“itching ears”*: they are following teachers who teach what suits their way of life (**2 Timothy 4:3**). They are easily taken away by every wind of doctrine (**Ephesians 4:14**). As well, others claim to originate from the day of Pentecost, too; but what they do shows they are in the dark. Some worship is characterized by jumping pews, wild shouts like mad men, and crawling like demon-possessed persons, contrary to sound doctrine. Jesus declares, *“And in vain they worship me, Teaching as doctrine the commandments of men”* (**Mark 7:7**).

The inspired Hebrew writer warns about the same problem: *“Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines”* (**Hebrew 13:9**). When Paul writes to a young preacher, he gives him similar admonition: *“... charge some that they teach no other doctrine”* (**1 Timothy 1:3-4**). He further warns, *“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons”* (**1 Timothy 4:1**).

Brothers and sisters, whatever is taught or followed that is contrary to the doctrine of Christ is the doctrine of demons—it has no power to save. Thus, it is a doctrine full of spiritual darkness. We are called from darkness into the marvelous light of Jesus Christ. Through His gospel, we are called to be complete in Him and to be faithful servants in His kingdom (**Philippians 3:13-16**; **2 Thessalonians 2:13-14**).

Those who are called in a way different from the simple call of the gospel are still in

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darkness, and they don't have God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit (**1 John 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 4:8; Luke 10:16**). We should come out of spiritual darkness and seek counsel from the same source early Christians did:

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, ... to God the Judge of all, ... to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant... (Hebrews 12: 12-14).

Let us beware of any doctrine of men that will lead us into spiritual darkness with the result being we will suffer spiritual destruction. The scripture teaches Jesus is life and light: He is the Light that shines in the darkness.

ONE GOD OR MORE?

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A few years ago, I recall a member of the church stating he believed there might be many gods. That statement is among the more perplexing phrases I have heard a congregational teacher utter. I was further reminded of this polytheistic viewpoint while studying with a member of a religious group. This group believes that God was not the first God nor the last—that Christ and Satan are both God's spirit-children and God had a father. We know this teaching to be contrary to scripture (**John 1:1-3**). As with many other scriptural topics, some find it easy to take scriptures out of context and twist them to mean something they were never intended to mean.



Before we look at the scriptures they propose, it must be noted how crucial must be our understanding of the Godhead. How can we serve the one true and living God if the One we serve is not the One we read about in the Bible?

The scripture they use to prove their point actually only muddies the water:

The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God." Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in

your law, 'I said, "You are gods" ' ? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God' ? (John 10:33-36).

If we look at this passage outside the context of the rest of scripture, there is a strong case in favor of the possibility of other gods. A look at the passage to which Jesus alludes clarifies this difficult passage. **John 10:34** is an allusion to **Psalms 82:6-7**, which says, "You are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High. But you shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes."

The word for gods, "Elohim," can refer to God, pagan gods, mighty ones, angelic beings, or judges. In this passage, it is widely interpreted to mean human judges. These were given the authority to judge on the earth but were in no way God's equals, as evidenced in **verse 7**: "But you shall die like men."

We know from scripture that there is no other God (**Deuteronomy 4:35, 39; 6:4; Isaiah 43:10; 44:6-8**) and that God cannot lie (**Titus 1:2, Hebrews 6:18**). God cannot contradict Himself. This particular group uses a weaker contortion of scripture in **1 Corinthians 8:5**, where the second half of the verse reads, "as there are many gods and many lords." Amazingly, all you have to do is read the whole verse to disprove their false assumption:

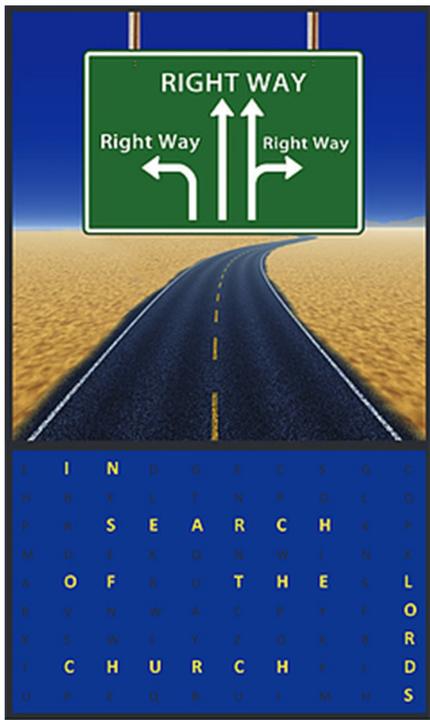
Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live (1 Corinthians 8:4-6).

From this verse we glean the following in regard to this passage: idols are not *real* gods—they are "nothing in the world"; there is *only* one God; idols are *so-called* gods but not really gods ("so-called gods" is found in the NKJV. The KJV says "there be that are called gods"); while there are many *false* gods, or idols, our God rules everything.

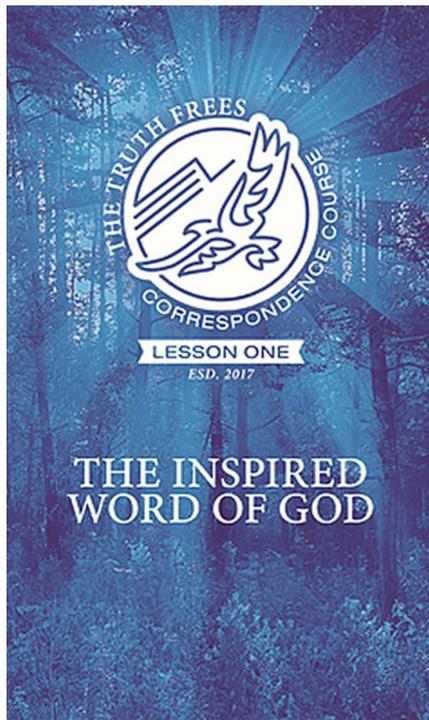


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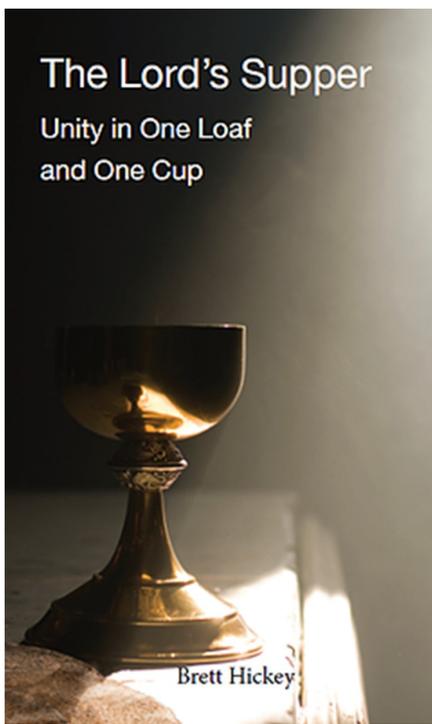
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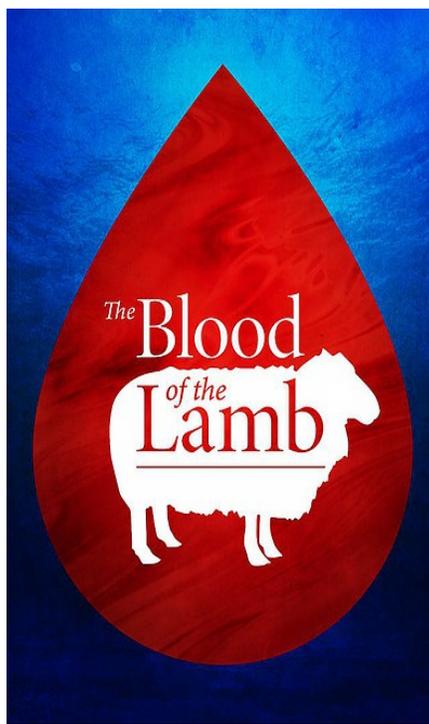
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